Nuremberg, or The Promised Land

Maurice Bardèche

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Translated by George F. Held

Editor's Note:

Maurice Bardèche's *Nuremberg ou la Terre promise* (*Nuremberg, or The Promised Land*) (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1948) is one of the earliest Revisionist works on the Second World War and its aftermath.

Although people who have never read the book proclaim it one of the first expressions of "Holocaust denial," the book is nothing of the sort.

Bardèche argues two theses. The minor thesis is that the French accusations against Germany at the Nuremberg Tribunal—including the preposterous charge of an intent to exterminate the French nation—were shamefully dishonest. The major thesis is genuinely prophetic: that the Nuremberg Tribunal had laid the foundations for a globalist New World Order in which nationalism would be forever stigmatized and suppressed.

The following excerpt, on the implications of the Tribunal's decision to treat the National Socialist party as a criminal conspiracy, is a brilliant illustration of the latter thesis.

[T]here is a very simple way to tell if the organization to which you belong runs the risk of being declared criminal one day. Essentially, you must mistrust energy. If you catch even a whiff of the adjective *nationalist*, if one invites you to be masters in your own lands, if one speaks to you about unity, discipline, force, grandeur, you cannot deny that this is not a very democratic vocabulary, and consequently you are likely one day to see your organization become criminal. So, beware of bad thoughts, and know that what we call criminal is always marked out with the same intentions.

The scholiasts agree here with the verdict. The *Judgment*, which appears in the first volume of the trial, notes the existence of a "plot or concerted plan against peace." This declaration requires many a gloss. But it is clear, in any case, that the plot starts with the existence of the party: it is the party itself which is the instrument of the plot, and, ultimately, it is the plot. This conclusion has some singular consequences. It is actually equivalent to prohibiting people from joining together for the purpose of making certain claims and from using certain other methods for this purpose. What the court means is this: you exposed yourselves to the risk, it says, of one day committing crimes against peace or crimes against humanity, and you cannot claim that you were unaware of this risk since one has written *Mein Kampf* for you. It is thus, ultimately, upon the party's program that condemnation is brought, and accordingly this judgment will constitute in the future an encroachment upon the national sovereignty of every nation. Our jurists say: your government is bad; you are free to change it. But you have the right to change it only while following certain rules. You think that the organization of the world is not perfect: you can try to modify it, but you are forbidden to make recourse to certain principles. However, it may be that the rules that they impose on us are those which perpetuate our impotence or that the principles of which we are prohibited even to think are those which would eliminate the disorder.

This accusation of joining a plot is an excellent invention. The world is from now on democratic for perpetuity. It is democratic by judicial decision. From now on a legal precedent weighs down on every sort of national rebirth. This is infinitely serious, for actually every party is by definition a plot or concerted plan, since every party is an association of men who propose to seize power and to apply their plan which they call a program, or at least to apply most of this plan. The decision of Nuremberg thus consists in making a preliminary selection between the parties. One is legitimate, and the other suspect. Those in the one are in line with the democratic spirit and have the right consequently to seize power and to have a concerted plan because it is certain that their concerted plan will never threaten democracy and peace. Those in the other party, on the contrary, are not entitled to have power, and consequently it is useless that they exist: it is understood that they contain in themselves the seeds of all kinds of crimes against peace and humanity. What is astonishing, moreover, is that the Americans do not understand Mr. Gottwald's policies:[1] for Mr. Gottwald is doing nothing other than applying in his country the wise precautions suggested by the new Law: he is merely giving the word "democratic" a somewhat peculiar sense.

The right to interfere is therefore inherent in this simple statement. This right, however, is peculiar in that it does not entail, or does not seem to entail, an identifiable will to interfere. It is not some great power in particular or some group of great powers which is opposed to the re-establishment of nationalist movements; it is an entity much vaguer; it is an entelechy without capacities or offices; it is the conscience of humanity. "We do not want to see that again," says the conscience of humanity. What *that* is, as we will see, nobody knows exactly. But this voice of humanity is quite convenient. This anonymous power is only a principle of impotence. It imposes nothing; it does not claim to impose anything. If a movement similar to National Socialism were established tomorrow, it is certain that the U.N. would not intervene to require its suppression. But the *universal conscience* would approve any government which announced the prohibition of such a party or, for greater convenience, of every party which it accused of resembling National Socialism. Every national resurrection, every policy of energy or simply of cleanliness, is thus struck with suspicion. They have twisted our consciences,

and now they look at us limp. Who did that? Who wanted that? It is *Nobody*, just as the Cyclops shouted. The Super-State does not exist, but the vetoes of the Super-State do exist: they are in the verdict of Nuremberg. The Super-State does the evil which it can do, before being able to render services. The evil which it can do is to disarm us against everything, against its enemies as well as against our own.

This is a singular situation. We are disarmed and threatened by an idea and by nothing other than an idea. Nothing is prohibited, but we are warned that a certain *orientation* is not good. We are invited to prepare in ourselves certain sympathies and to instill in ourselves several definite refusals. They teach us how to conjugate verbs, as one does for children: "Mr. Mandel[2] is a great patriot; Mr. Roosevelt is a great citizen of the world; Mr. Jean-Richard Bloch[3] is a great writer; Mr. Benda[4] is a thinker," and conversely: "I will never be a racist; I will like Mr. Kriegel-Valrimont;[5] I will eternally curse the SS, Charles Maurras, and *Je Suis Partout*."[6]

And what about those whose minds are not open to these sympathies, or who reject these refusals? Those whose hearts answer to other calls, those whose minds think only in terms of other categories, those who are made differently? I have the same impression here as when reading certain Marxist texts: these people do not have a brain made like mine; it is another race. This thought puts us back on track. There is a closed world of democratic idealism which is of the same order as the closed world of Marxism. It is not astonishing if their methods manage to coincide, if their justice ends up being the same even though words, as they use them, do not have all the same sense. It too is a religion. It is the same attack on our hearts. When they condemn nationalism, they know well what they are doing. It is the foundation of their Law. They condemn *your truth*; they declare it radically wrong. They condemn our feeling, our roots even, our most profound ways of seeing and feeling. They explain to us why our brain is not made as it should be: we have the brain of barbarians.

This permanent warning prepares for us a form of political life of which we should not be unaware and of which the experience of the last three years on the continent does not permit us to be unaware. The condemnation of the National Socialist Party goes much further than it seems to. In reality, it reaches all the solid forms, all the geological forms of political life. Every nation, every party which urges us to remember our soil, our tradition, our trade, our race is suspect. Whoever claims right of the first occupant and calls to witness things as obvious as the ownership of the city offends against a universal morality which denies the right of the people to write their laws. This applies not just to the Germans; it is all of us who are dispossessed. No one has any more the right to sit down in his field and say: "This ground belongs to me." No one has any more the right to stand up in the city and say: "We are the old ones; we built the houses of this city; anyone who does not want to obey our laws should get out." It is written now that a council of impalpable beings has the capacity to know what occurs in our houses and our cities. Crimes against humanity: this law is good; this one is not good. Civilization has the right to veto.

We lived up to now in a solid universe whose generations had deposited stratifications, one after the other. All was clear: the father was the father; the law was the law; the foreigner was the foreigner. One had the right to say that the law was hard, but it was the law. Today these sure bases of political life are anathema: for these truths constitute the program of a racist party condemned at the court of humanity. In exchange, the

foreigner recommends to us a universe according to his dreams. There are no more borders, there are no more cities. From one end to the other of the continent the laws are the same, and also the passports, and also the judges, and also the currencies. Only one police force and only one brain: the senator from Milwaukee inspects and decides.

In return for which, trade is free; at last *trade is free*. We plant some carrots which by chance never sell well, and we buy some hoeing machines which always happen to be very expensive.

And we are free to protest, free, infinitely free to write, to vote, to speak in public, provided that we never take measures which can change all that. We are free to get upset and to fight in a universe of wadding. One does not know very well where our freedom ends, where our nationality ends, one does not know very well where what is permitted ends. It is an elastic universe. One does not know any more where one's feet are set; one does not even know any more if one has feet; one feels very light, as if one's body had been lost.

But for those who grant us this simple ablation what infinite rewards, what a multitude of tips! This universe which they polish up and try to make look good to us is similar to some palace in Atlantis. There are everywhere small glasswares, columns of false marble, inscriptions, magic fruits. By entering this palace you abdicate your power, in exchange you have the right to touch the golden apples and to read the inscriptions. You are nothing any more; you do not feel any more the weight of your body; you have ceased being a man: you are one of the faithful of the religion of Humanity. At the bottom of the sanctuary there sits a Negro god. You have all the rights, except to speak evil of the god.

Notes

1. Klement Gottwald became president of Czechoslovakia in 1948. He nationalized the country's industries, collectivised its farms, and purged many non-Communists (and later Communists) from the government. — Trans.

2. Georges Mandel (1885–1944) a French Jewish resistance leader, who was captured in 1940 in Morocco by French forces loyal to Vichy, sentenced to life imprisonment by Marshal Pétain in 1941, and executed in July 1944 in retaliation for the assassination of the Vichy Minister of Propaganda by the Resistance. — Trans.

3. Jean-Richard Bloch (1884–1947) was a French Jewish Communist writer and militant anti-fascist. — Trans.

4. Julien Benda (1867–1956) a French Jewish rationalist philosopher and novelist, who before 1930 had criticized intellectuals for their involvement with politics and nationalism, but who later supported communism, opposed fascism and in particular Nazism, and said that intellectuals "must now take sides." — Trans.

5. Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont (1914–2006) was a French Jewish militant Communist and a Resistance leader. — Trans.

6. *Je Suis Partout* (*I Am Everywhere*) was the title of a fascist, nationalist and collaborationist journal (1930–1944) to which Charles Maurras was a contributor. Bardèche himself also wrote for it. Maurras was an agnostic anti-Semitic anti-Protestant monarchist Roman Catholic philosopher and writer who rejected much of the teachings in the New Testament. Though a confirmed Germanophobe, he called the German occupation and the subsequent Vichy government a "divine surprise." In September 1944 he was arrested, tried as a collaborator and sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He died shortly after being released in 1952. — Trans.

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